

**Meeting of Full Governing Board  
18<sup>th</sup> July 2022  
4.30pm in School Library**

**MINUTES**

<b>Governors Present:</b>	Mick Baker, Philip Brown, Lara Coleman, Jane Dickson, Matt Hillier, Dick Knight, Millie McDevitt, Catherine Packham, Bronagh Shevlin, Bridget Taylor (Chair)
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Andrea Cumming, Roshan Dias-Jayasinghe, Jeremy Holtom & Catherine Mockeridge (Item 5a)

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
	Note – item 5a was taken after 3b, the minutes are written in original agenda order.	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><b>a) Welcome</b> The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome.</p> <p><b>b) Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies for absence received from Hiba Nour, Emma Grose was also absent from the meeting.</p> <p><b>c) Declarations of Interest</b> The declarations register had been circulated within the meeting pack, there were no declarations relating to agenda items.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Chair's Update</b> The Chair provided an update on business conducted on behalf of the governing board and proposed activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual meetings had commenced between the chair and individual governors.</li> <li>• There was a vacancy for two governors to join the nominations panel.</li> <li>• The vice chair election would be held in the autumn term.</li> <li>• Programme of governor monitoring visits to be reintroduced, alignment of responsibilities to be considered at the first meeting in autumn.</li> <li>• Governors' code of conduct to be reviewed and used as an opportunity to reflect on how the board operates.</li> <li>• Governors required to be appointed to the Headteacher appraisal panel for the following year in addition to an appeals governor if required.</li> <li>• Further Governors required for curriculum and equalities links.</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Last Meeting Dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022</b></p> <p><b>a) Approval of Minutes</b> The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved seven pages of minutes from the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The Chair signed them as confirmation of their accuracy.</p> <p><b>b) Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</b></p>	

Signature.....Date.....

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability Committee – The local headteacher’s had met as a group to review progress to date.</li> <li>• Attendance – Senior leaders had visited Willingdon School to look at policies and processes. Getting back to 97% attendance would be a struggle for the school, attendance on day of meeting just 77%, thought to be due to the short week before end of term.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Headteacher’s Report/Update to include safeguarding</b></p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report to governors on an assumed read basis highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 10 had completed their mock exams which had come out relatively well in terms of progress. The key driver to ensuring good outcomes in year 11 would be attendance of all students.</li> <li>• Year nine mock exams were completed in English, maths and science providing a good baseline moving forward.</li> <li>• GCSE results day would be 25<sup>th</sup> August at which time there would be press release, not including progress as agreed by all local secondary heads. It was expected that outcomes for attainment from the school would be strong.</li> <li>• Building works progressing well, with installation of additional toilets looking likely to be completed on schedule.</li> <li>• Staff wellbeing initiatives included making toilets more accessible for all staff and chilled water in staff room.</li> <li>• No changes to previous report regard staff leaving, two new members were joining in food technology and maths.</li> <li>• Temporary head of year being put in year 11 to cover sickness absence.</li> <li>• Attendance visit to Willingdon School raised a key point that their procedures were rigorous with letters going out when attendance dropped to 97%.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>The following points were noted from the latest set of safeguarding data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying and prejudiced incidents had both reduced over the last half term.</li> <li>• Incidents relating to race and ethnicity continued to be the highest type of logged incidents, with an increase following the set-up of the specific group, indicating that previously some incidents were unrecorded.</li> <li>• Year 9 continues to have the highest number of recorded incidents potentially due to that year group being the most impacted by lock downs having only had one full year physically in school</li> </ul> <p><u>Comment and questions from governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did Willingdon School have a similar student profile?</li> <li>• Can covid absences be taken out of attendance data?</li> </ul> <p><u>Response to governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingdon was smaller with about 1100 students. The main difference was that at start of school day the gates were closed with access limited through one entrance where lateness was logged with detentions given out at the end of that day.</li> <li>• Covid absence is recorded as any other sickness absence and included within attendance data.</li> </ul>	

<b>5</b>	<p><b>School Development Plan</b></p> <p><b>a) Anti-Racism</b></p> <p>Governors received an update from the school leads on the anti-racism work that had been going on in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall anti racism strategy was “safe people, safe place” making Dorothy Stringer a safe place to learn and work in.</li> <li>• The key issues had been around student trust, in response the racial discrimination support service had been set up as a drop-in service for students at lunch time. Take up of the service was low with lack of trust that issues would be dealt with cited as one reason that they were not coming forward. Additionally, students did not want to give up their valuable lunch break. There had been cases of students attempting to act themselves, through lack of trust or understanding of what the school was doing. These issues gave a focus to the school leads over the second part of the academic year.</li> <li>• Action around beliefs implemented to enable students to believe that they would be listened to and that something would be done. Acknowledgement of the situation for students of colour was important to them as was an understanding of an appropriate response from the student perspective.</li> <li>• Development of a common language as a school in consultation with students.</li> <li>• People of colour support groups developed offering six sessions for year 8 and 9 students. Many students put themselves forward with the final 20 attending chosen by their heads of year, with a priority for those that may not have previously been involved in similar discussion groups. The programme was workshop based with the aim of providing children with the tools to emotionally deal with racism themselves and to build trust with the school. As a result of the workshops three common themes came out as an issue, being: name calling and racial slurs being commonplace, lack of staff understanding and racial profiling.</li> <li>• Brighton &amp; Hove council had committed to be an anti-racist city within the next three years and the police were keen to support.</li> <li>• Sanctions had been a big part of discussions with students expressing concerns that they had to prove a racial incident had happened and that in many cases the perpetrator was seemed to be believed above the victim. Sanctions were not always visible to the victims leading to a sense of nothing being done.</li> <li>• Students advised that they like to be able to report incidents at any time that the default position would be that they were believed and not have to gather evidence to prove an incident had occurred.</li> <li>• Staff members needed to recognise the accumulation effect of further incidents following initial reporting and to change the language to acknowledge the impact on students.</li> <li>• Students wanted sincere apologies, not to be forced into an awkward situation where they were uncomfortable having to face the perpetrator.</li> <li>• Going forward students suggested sanctions that would lead to a change in behaviour, not just to serve as a punishment. This would take the form of time out in the student's day to receive education to get them to understand the underlying reasons for their actions. Community service was raised as a possible sanction.</li> <li>• Future aspirations were to provide all students of colour with the opportunity to be part of the programme of support and to wrap up the actions coming from the first cohort with involvement from form tutors and heads of year.</li> </ul>	
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- A group had been set up for parents and carers of colour, this did not cover the same agenda as the school group was working to as it was not focussed on parents of children of colour.
- Children were keen for the curriculum to be relooked at and to be involved in its development.
- Regards school uniform there was a request for the school to sign up to the Halo code.
- In terms of resourcing time would be needed to commit to workshops every Wednesday.

Questions and comments from governors

- Was there scope to make any of the training for staff compulsory?
- What about allyship training to help young people to intervene in the correct way when they recognise a racist incident?
- What can the governing board do to support, what sort of questions could governors be asking to make sure that the issue remained on the board work agenda?
- What level of flexibility do the school have to adjust the curriculum, in terms of decolonisation and reducing the reinforcement of stereotypes.
- Are students of colour disillusioned with police treatment?
- Could there be some initiative such as an anti-racism slogan to signal to the school community?
- Why is the halo code important to students?
- In the future where will the school go with the curriculum, changing what was taught could be an area for significant impact.

Response to governor comment and questions

- Advice had been that the compulsory aspects detract from the entire process; staff had been invited to attend.
- The heads of department had to work within the constraints of the curriculum to prepare children for GCSE exams. In the lower school there was some more flexibility. The reading programme for year 7 was an example of a changed approach. Further city-wide training for governors was under consideration.

**ACTION – Look at what anti racist training available for governors.**

- There is a mistrust of the police amongst students of colour, with most having some negative experience personally or towards their family. Boys commented that they had been stopped by the police in Brighton & Hove just walking back from the school. The school did have a link with the community police, when a police investigation was underway the school were limited on what they could do in school.
- Use of slogans and badges can convey the wrong message, the aim was to move away from categorisation that some people were racist and to try and deal with racism and prejudice that individuals have and may not know about. Use of badges or lanyards highlights that those not wearing them leading to thinking that they may be racist.
- Inclusion of a clause regarding extreme hair styles in school policy was prejudiced against afro types of hair, by signing up to the halo code the school would be allowing hair to be worn in its natural style which was healthier for the hair.
- Moments in time throughout history were identified which students were keen to have incorporated into the curriculum. Further adjustments to content to widen viewpoints was being considered.

TD

5.30pm - Catherine Mockeridge and Jeremy Holtom left the meeting.

**b) School Development Priorities**

The Headteacher introduced the three main priority areas for school development in the next academic year.

- Improve student attendance, particularly in disadvantaged groups.
- Develop behaviour/values and relationships in line with core values of creativity, resilience, and respect.
- Further develop adaptive teaching with a focus on active engagement and reciprocal reading. Main inset training in September to be on adaptive teaching and engagement in lessons.

Comment and questions from governors

- Would there be a full session on school development plan in the autumn?

Response to governor comment and questions

- The school development plan was written, the final aspects relating to outcomes would need to be incorporated.

**c) Uniform Update on Survey and Phased Adaptations**

The governor members of the uniform working group provided an update on the outcomes from the staff, student and parent surveys on school uniform and the proposed actions going forward. A PowerPoint presentation had been circulated on the morning of the meeting; this was used as the basis for discussion.

- 1166 replies in total to the surveys. Year 11 had left at the time of the student survey.
- Majority of respondents in support of the more casual approach to uniform adopted by the school.
- The general parental opinion was that school uniform breaches should be dealt with by tutors in tutor time and that student wellbeing should be a priority when dealing with issues.
- Widespread support for any colour hair, any black shoes and keeping the skirt option.

The quick wins in response to the survey outcomes were as follows:

- For children with special educational needs (SEND) accommodate different trousers, non-synthetic sweatshirts, leggings in addition to tights, underlayers, cardigans, wearing of PE kit on the day that PE lessons being held.
- For BAME students allow any colour hijab and sign up to the Halo code in addition to allowing any colour hair.
- Staff to teach / focus on pastoral relationships as students and parent /carers did not want surveillance.

Comment and questions from Governors

- In terms of the proposed relaxations in uniform code for SEND students, would that also apply to non-SEND students.
- Any colour hair could lead to multi colour, wording needs to be careful to avoid very extreme hair styles.
- Reflecting standards and principles of suitable workplace attire in policy appropriate.
- Concerns over poverty proofing with families potentially buying high-cost trainers with obvious logos.
- Was there any support for a no uniform policy?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With a casual uniform policy and additional adjustments for SEND, the uniform was being lost, Where the line was to be drawn needed to be clear.</li> <li>• When drafting policy, it should be made clear how it links into the principles and ethos of the behaviour policy regards inclusivity as a school community and meeting the needs of all.</li> <li>• White base layers under uniform only.</li> <li>• Going forward a black polo shirt might be a better option for all uniform as white polos get dirty quickly.</li> <li>• The PE department were clear that on hygiene ground they wanted separate colours and for children to change after PE.</li> <li>• Preference for the skirt to be available in different lengths, to avoid the rolling of skirts.</li> <li>• Tights were being worn by some in a ragged condition, this was partly a fashion and difficult to address. Allowing leggings might avoid this.</li> <li>• If possible, under supplier contract introduce a crewneck sweatshirt.</li> <li>• Cost issues do need to be addressed, including reduction of branded items using sew on badges.</li> <li>• Could someone be brought in to facilitate a conversation with students about rape culture and issues around body shamming that cannot be addressed under a uniform policy. The school would need to be prepared to make changes if issues arose from the discussions, not just use the facilitator to enforce rules.</li> <li>• The uniform should be universally accessible for people with sensory difficulties as a lot of people will not request adjustments to enable them to be comfortable at school.</li> <li>• There had been some comments about quality of school uniform items in the survey.</li> </ul> <p><u>Response to Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the equality act anticipatory duty the relaxations would apply to all students.</li> <li>• There were comments from staff and parents in support of no uniform, the question had not been included in the survey.</li> <li>• The supplier had already been approached regards quality issues with adjustments made.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREEMENT– In principle the board were willing to incorporate the suggested changes into uniform policy and to introduce them at a time that fitted into the school’s timetable for the new year arrangements bearing in mind the current contractual restrictions with the uniform supplier.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION – School Leaders to implement the changes that were possible short term and to report back to governors on longer term plan to introduce changes including the tendering process in advance of the expiry of the current contract in 2025.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION – Joint communication from Chair and Head to parents as a follow up to earlier communication on uniform.</b></p>	<p>MH</p> <p>BT /MH</p>
6	<p><b>Business Group</b></p> <p><b>a) Finance Report</b></p> <p>The Business Manager presented his report to Governors, this was accompanied by the budget monitoring report to end of May 2022. Business group had previously met to go through the report in detail. Issues for Governors to note were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in living wage had been backdated to September 2021, previously January 2022. That additional element would be funded by the Local Authority.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget outturn currently at £236,200 surplus, additionally there was £250,000 in the ATP sink fund that could be used if necessary to absorb the salary increases.</li> </ul> <p><b>b) Scheme of Delegation</b> Following a review by Business Group, the scheme of delegation was proposed for annual reapproval.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT- The Full Governing Board approved the scheme of delegation as presented subject to updating of the front page.</b></p>	
7	<p><b>Policies and Other Documents for Approval</b></p> <p><b>a) Data Protection Policy</b> The data protection policy was presented for approval. Governors noted that the references to statutory provisions at the start of the policy were out of date.</p> <p><b>ACTION – Philip Brown agreed to do a review of the Data Protection Policy with the Data Protection Officer before bringing back to the board for approval.</b></p>	<b>PB</b>
8	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>a) Data Training – Future Workshop</b> The Chair suggested a workshop for governors to provide an overview of school performance data. Governors were in support of the suggestion.</p> <p><b>b) Collaborative Agreement</b> The Board had been invited to enter into a collaboration with eight other local schools for the purpose of convening joint committees/panels for processes relating to student exclusion, staff matters and complaints. A proposed collaborative agreement was presented.</p> <p><b>AGREEMENT – The Full Governing Board agreed to join the collaborative arrangement as outlined in the documents presented.</b></p>	
9	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>a) Ofsted Training</b> Slides from recent training to be circulated.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.52pm</p> <p>Date of next meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022</p>	